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Book S342



THE DUTY OF
Union in a just War,

A
DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN
STONEHAM, (MASS.) April 8, 1813.

BEING
THE DAY OF THE STATE FAST.

By JOHN H. STEVENS, V. D. M.

Pastor of the Church in said Town.

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DISCOURSE.

JUDGES, V. 23.

Curse ye, Meroz, said the Angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

The passage I first read, we find recorded in the song composed by Deborah, an inspired prophetess, and judge in Israel. She composed and sung this song in consequence of a signal victory gained over the enemies of Israel, in time of war; a war in which God himself had commanded them to engage in, for the defence of their rights, liberties and blessings.

Israel, for whom God had done great things, sinned with a high hand against him; and to punish them for their idolatry and wickedness, the Lord suffered Jabin, a powerful king of Canaan, to oppress them and bring them into bondage, and afflict them twenty years. This humbled them, and they cried unto the Lord, and he directed Deborah to call upon Barak to collect an army, and march against the army of Jabin, commanded by Sisera, and the Lord promised to deliver them into his hand. When the requisition for men was made, some of the governors offered themselves and the people willingly; others held back and refused their aid; however, Deborah, the prophetess, and Barak, the general, with his little army, marched, and attacked the mighty host of their enemies, and overthrew them, and so delivered their nation from

oppression: for the Lord was with them, and fought for Israel against their enemies. This one battle was so decisive that it put an end to the war, and the land had rest forty years. Deborah and Barak celebrated this victory in a divine song, in which they call upon kings, and all people to consider what wonderful things God had done for Israel. They describe the sin and misery of the nation; they render praise to God; they give commendation to some of the Israelites, and pass censures on others, especially the inhabitants of Meroz, mentioned in the text: *Curse ye, Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.*

This passage of scripture contains the following general truths: —

1. One nation may be so oppressed by another, that it may be the will of the Lord for them to take up arms, and go to war with their oppressors.

2. In such a case, it is the duty of the whole nation to unite against the common enemy.

3. If any part of the nation, in these circumstances, withhold their aid and help from their own nation, and side with the enemy, it is highly displeasing to God. — This was the conduct of the inhabitants of Meroz, and the angel of the Lord ordered them to be cursed with a bitter curse.

4. A nation engaged in a just war, a war for the defence of their just rights; a war that God approves; such a war God considers as his own cause, and to help in such a cause is to come to the help of the Lord; and if the nation, in these circumstances, humble themselves for their sins, and cry unto the Lord, he will be with them, and whatever difficulties may be in the way, however powerful the enemy may be, if they have nine hundred chariots of war, or a thousand ships of war, yet the Lord will give victory to the oppressed, who humbly trust in him.

In order to illustrate and make application of this subject, for our benefit on this occasion, I shall consider the similarity between the character and conduct of Israel, and

that of our own nation; and the similarity of God's dealings towards Israel, and that of our nation.

1. What great things the Lord did for Israel, in bringing them out of bondage into Egypt, conducting them to Canaan, casting out the heathen and planting them in the good land. Israel, the seed of Abraham, God's friend, were enslaved in Egypt; Pharaoh, a cruel tyrant, oppressed them, and set task-masters over them, and made them serve with rigor, and prevented their worshipping God agreeably to the dictates of their own consciences. They cried unto the Lord in their distress, and he heard them, and sent Moses to deliver them. God wrought wonders in Egypt by the hand of Moses; and at length he brought his people out, and led them on to the Red Sea, which the Lord divided, and led them through on dry ground: their enemies attempting to follow were swept away by the returning billows. He led them in the wilderness forty years, with a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. He wrought many wonderful miracles on their behalf, and at last divided Jordan, and led them over into Canaan. And when the heathen combined against them, the Lord fought for them, and gave them the victory, and settled them quietly in that good land, flowing as with milk and honey, and they spread abroad, and became a great nation.

What a picture this exhibits of the great and marvellous things God has done for our nation. Our fathers were in bondage in England, afflicted with the hard hand of tyranny and oppression: they were persecuted, oppressed and proscribed, and not suffered the free enjoyment of their holy religion. They were oppressed with enormous taxes, were prosecuted, imprisoned and fined, for worshipping God agreeably to the dictates of their own conscience. They cried unto the Lord in their distress, and he heard them, and put it into their hearts to emigrate from their native country, to this then howling wilderness. The Lord took our fathers under his protection, and brought them across the wide ocean, and planted them in this American land; and when the heathen, who were numerous, combined against them, the Lord was on

their side. He weakened and destroyed the enemy by pestilence, and in various ways, and gave our fathers victory; he caused them to take root, increase and spread abroad in this land; he blessed them in their basket and store, and raised them up to a great people. And when the mother country saw their prosperity, she envied them, and sought to oppress them here as she had done at home; she sent over her fleets and her armies to enforce her unjust mandates. Our fathers, trusting in the Lord, took up arms, determined to defend their rights; and the God of armies was with them, and defeated the enemy, and led them on to victory, independence, and a rank among the nations of the earth. The Lord has, since that period, greatly blessed and prospered this nation, and favored us with every temporal and spiritual, civil and religious privilege; he has caused us to become a great, rich, and powerful nation. God has done great and marvellous things for us as a people.

2. After God had done such great things for Israel, and had settled them in the good land of Canaan in peace, where they enjoyed his word and ordinances, and every blessing, we should have supposed they would have forsaken all other Gods, and feared, worshipped and served the Lord Jehovah with all the heart. But instead of this they sinned against him; they forsook the rock of their salvation, and went after strange Gods and worshipped them, as it is said in our context—*They chose them new Gods, and did evil in the sight of the Lord.*

And has not our nation, in this particular, done as Israel did, forsaken God, and done great evil in his sight? When we consider what great things God has done our nation, in planting it in this good land, increasing and prospering it, and when its enemies rose up, and came in like a flood, the Lord lifted up a standard, and arrested their progress, and gave us victory, gave us peace, and established us a nation, and blessed us on every hand, and gave us his word, his sabbath, his gospel and ordinances. When we consider how much God has done for us, might it not have been expected that we should have been an obedient people; that we should have chosen God for

our portion, and feared, loved, and served him, with all the heart; that our enquiry would have been, *What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits unto us as a people?* But of this humble, pious, obedient, holy conduct, we have, Jeshurun like, *waxed fat, and kicked against the Lord*; we have, as a people, forsaken the Lord God of our forefathers, and lightly estimated the rock of our salvation. Like Israel, we have done great evil in the sight of the Lord, and provoked the Holy One to anger. All kinds of iniquity have abounded in this nation, and been crying to heaven for vengeance. We have been ungrateful to God, the giver of all our mercies: we have been ungrateful for our health and strength; ungrateful for our food and raiment; ungrateful for our civil and religious liberty; ungrateful for peace that we have enjoyed so long; ungrateful for the sabbath, the gospel and its ordinances; ungrateful for Jesus Christ and his great salvation; ungrateful for the Holy Spirit and his gracious influence in the conversion of sinners.

Pride is a sin which has greatly prevailed in this nation. We have been lifted up with pride; we have been proud of our independence; proud of our liberty; proud of our constitutions of government; proud of our rulers, our numbers and wealth. Some have been proud of their religion, and others of their wickedness, glorying in their shame. Pride is a hateful, dangerous sin. *Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.* God is said to know the proud afar off, to hate pride; and he has said *he will stain the pride of all flesh.*

Profaneness is another awful sin in our land. We have become a profane nation: thousands and thousands every day, blaspheming the holy name of God, uttering horrid oaths and imprecations upon themselves and others. All ages and sexes are uttering this profane language; even little children, cursing and swearing, and taking the holy and reverend names of God and Christ in vain. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,* is the divine command: *by reason of bearing the Lord's name, and the pleasant places of the wilderness are shaked up.*

Intemperance is another prevalent sin in this nation ; the intemperate use of spirituous liquors has become awfully alarming. It is thought by some, that ardent spirits consumed in this nation, cost more than to maintain government. Many are given up to intoxication, spending their property, destroying their health, bringing shame and poverty upon their families, and fitting their souls for perdition. This vice leads on to many others, such as idleness, gaming, lewdness, and the like. This sin has become so prevalent and alarming, that serious people through the state and nation, are uniting together and forming societies for the express purpose of suppressing it.

Falseness is another great sin, which increases the guilt of this nation. A lying spirit has taken possession of the hearts of many. What falsehoods are uttered by many to cover their own wickedness ; to deceive and cheat their fellow-men in their dealings, and to injure the character of men both in an out of office ; How are our public prints, which ought to be vehicles of truth, turned into channels of falsehood and misrepresentation ?

Gaming and vain amusements are prevailing sins which many live in, and many professed Christians too, to the dishonor of God and disgrace of religion. Sabbath-breaking is another great sin in our land ; how is the Lord's day violated, and turned by many into a holiday for feasting, and drinking and visiting, and riding abroad, and doing worldly business ? God said to Israel, *If ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem, on the sabbath day, then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.*

Lewdness, perjury, and oppression, are great sins in this land. Division, strife, and contention, are abounding sins, which threaten the ruin of our nation, for the Lord has said, *a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.* An inordinate thirst for property and love of money, is to be found among the prevailing sins in this nation. We are told in the word of God, *The love of money is the root of*

all evil. Perhaps there never was a nation that manifested greater love of money, and zeal to acquire wealth, than this nation has for many years. It has been spoken of by other nations, what lovers of money Americans were! Many have made a God of wealth and worshipped Mammon. It is owing to this cupidity in many, that the noble flame of patriotism, that burnt in the hearts of their fathers, is quenched in them, and they are disposed to supply the enemy for the sake of gain. Idolatry has been no small sin in this land; we have set up idols in our heart and worshipped them. Theft, robbery, and murder are great sins, which not a few in this nation have been concerned in perpetrating. The Lord said to Israel, *Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.* This has been our criminal conduct; we have robbed God of that love, homage, praise, and adoration, which was his due, and our duty to render. Many great and awful errors have been embraced by many in this nation, such as Arminianism, Antinomianism, Socinianism, Universalism, Deism, and Atheism. Jesus Christ, the eternal son of God, has been called an impostor; the bible has been ridiculed as priestcraft and delusion; experimental religion has been denounced as enthusiasm, and the work of the spirit of God ascribed to Satan by many. A preached gospel and holy ordinances have been despised and neglected, and opposition to God, to Christ, and his wholly kingdom, has greatly abounded in this nation. O! what a sinful people we have been; what evil we have done in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger, and to pull down judgements upon us, as it is at this time! Our sins have been the primary cause of all our sufferings, and our calamity at the present day; I fear and deprecate them more than all the enemies that have, or can come against us.

3. God was angry with Israel for their idolatry, ingratitude, profaneness and wickedness, and to punish them he sold them into the hands of Jabin, a powerful king of Canaan, as appears from our context. Jabin was a great king in those days; he had nine hundred chariots of iron

for war, and his army was equal. It is written, twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel; he disarmed them and made them tributary; he had his soldiers stationed through the land, and by the highways; and their oppressions were such, that it is said by Deborah in her song, *That the villages were deserted by the inhabitants; the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through bye-ways*, to avoid the enemy. When even the women went out to draw water, their archers would wantonly shoot their arrows at them. Thus the Lord for twenty years suffered this tyrant Jabin to oppress Israel, to punish them for their wickedness, to humble them, to cause them to feel their dependance upon him. Now the Lord has been treating our nation in the same way, and for the same reasons. To punish us for our many and great sins against the Lord, he has suffered the king of England, for about twenty years mightily to oppress us. It is about twenty years since England began to impress our seamen and take our vessels, under one pretext or another, and insult us and make depredations upon us; and there is no doubt we have been plundered of vastly more property, and suffered more personal injury, in the course of twenty years, from the king of England and his nation, than Israel did in the same time from Jabin and his nation. Jabin was a powerful king; he had nine hundred chariots of iron. George the 3d has been a powerful king; he has had a thousand ships of war, and by them he has commanded the ocean, and claimed it as his property; by them he has plundered the nations, slaughtered thousands and tens of thousands, reduced cities to ashes, and spread death and desolation far and wide. With his thousand ships he has committed every outrage and cruelty, and robbery, and murder, man-stealing and depredation, that the most barbarous nations have been guilty of. England has taken from us, in time of peace, without any just provocation, about a thousand vessels, with their rich cargoes, carried them into her own ports, condemned and sold them, and put the money into her own coffers, to the amount of many millions of dollars. All this we have borne without re-

sistance for many years. We have complained and remonstrated, and plead with them by negotiation, to cease their plundering and taking our vessels, and do us justice. They have amused us with fair words, but continued the practice. Can the annals of history furnish an instance, where a nation at peace with another nation, and without giving any just cause of offence, has been plundered to the amount our nation has? Not one, I presume. There never was, and I trust there never will be, such a case while man inhabits the earth.

But this oppression, great and long as it has been, is not to be compared to another we have endured; that is, impressing, holding in cruel bondage, starving, whipping, and sometimes putting to death our native citizens, who are seamen. For twenty years they have continued the practice of impressing our seamen out of our merchant vessels, aboard their ships of war; this I consider to be manstealing, which the word of God ranks among the greatest crimes. It is impossible to ascertain the exact number they have impressed; but from the public documents I have seen, from the numbers found aboard their ships we have taken, and the statement of their own muster books, which have fallen into our hands, from the best information I have been able to obtain on this subject, it is my opinion that in the course of twenty years, Great Britain has impressed more than *twenty thousand* of our seamen, multitudes of whom were native-born Americans. Thus the husband has been torn from his beloved wife and children; the son from his parents, his brothers and sisters; the citizen from his home, and native land, and been waisted to distant climes, and held in cruel bondage, one, five, ten, and eighteen years. To hear the statement of some, under oath, who have lived to return, describing their suffering, is enough to fill the soul with horror. Some depose and say, when they were impressed because they would not enter, they have been put in irons, kept on bread and water, and whipped a dozen lashes every week, until wore down by hunger and scourging, they were forced to enter. One deposed, that after he was impressed, he attempted to escape; was

retaken, carried back, and whipped sixty lashes, and then immersed in cold water one hour. This is the way our native citizens have been tortured aboard of their floating bastilles. Who that has American blood running in his veins, can hear of these cruelties inflicted upon our own citizens without indignation? Yet we are told by some, that this is a small affair, not worth contending for a moment; but let such unfeeling souls be placed under the discipline of a British man-of-war, for one year, and they would no longer speak with so much apathy about the sufferings of our seafaring brethren.

England has come into our waters with her ships, fired upon our citizens, and killed them. She has sent spies among us to stir up division, withdraw the people from their governments and dismember the union; she has armed and excited the barbarian of the wilderness to make war upon us, lay waste our frontiers, to butcher and scalp men, women, and children; and the scalp, reeking in blood, I have understood they have been in the habit of purchasing at six dollars a piece. But am I stating the horrid conduct of a Christian nation, or that of Turks and Arabs? Yes, that of a Christian nation. I have been noticing some of those evils and oppression we have been suffering from that government which has been styled, "*The bulwark of our religion, and the world's last hope.*" But from such a bulwark, may the Lord in mercy save us and our posterity.

However pious and godly many of the people in England may be, and I believe God has many dear children there, who are groaning under the oppression of their rulers; yet I do believe, in my heart, that there is not a more corrupt and wicked government on earth than the British government. They have, in my opinion, caused more wars, bloodshed, misery, and desolation in the earth than any other government. I believe they have been the cause of most of the wars Napoleon has been engaged in, which have caused rivers of blood to flow. No doubt they were the cause of the late war between France and Russia, which the last year swept (probably) three hundred thousand souls into eternity. I believe the blood

of millions is crying to heaven for vengeance upon this corrupt government; and undoubtedly the time is not far distant, when the Lord in his anger will overturn it, and in answer to the prayers of the good people of England, bless them with a better government. The cruelties which have been perpetrated by this government, on her own subjects in England and Ireland; on the Danes, and in many parts of Europe; in the East and West Indies; in Africa and America, are enough to astonish heaven and earth, were they fully known; but enough is known to fill the soul with horror!

What wanton waste of property did they cause in this land, in the former war! Falmouth, Charlestown, Danbury and many other fine towns, were wantonly burnt to ashes. But this was nothing compared to the savage cruelties committed on our poor prisoners that the fortune of war put in their power. More than eleven thousand, it has been said, were poisoned, starved, and by other cruel treatment, destroyed aboard their prison ships at New York. And William Cunningham, who was provost marshal to the royal army at New-York, (afterwards executed for forgery) confessed before his execution, that *with*, and without the orders of his government, more than two thousand American prisoners he had starved to death in the different churches of New-York, where they were confined; and that he had caused two hundred and seventy-five to be hung in the dead of the night, and buried! Give ear, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth! This was the way our poor fathers and brethren were sacrificed by this government and its agents in the last war; and they have begun the same horrid practice again the present war. They allow their savage allies to murder and scalp our poor wounded prisoners, and then leave them unburied for the swine to feed upon, as was the case at the river Raisin; and all this, too, in violation of solemn articles of capitulation. Other prisoners they have shut up in infected jails and prison-ships, and kept them on rotten, damaged provisions, until disease has ended their days. But my heart sickens, and my nerves

tremble, in the recital of these barbarities and cruelties which we have suffered from this nation. Now say my hearers; say an impartial world, have we not cause of war with this nation? Is not the war in which we are engaged just? and may we not believe a God of justice approves of it?

4. Israel was so oppressed by Jabin, and had borne his tyranny so long, even twenty years, that it was the will of the Lord that they should take up arms, and go to war and fight their oppressors: And the Lord revealed his mind and will to Deborah, a prophetess. The people cried unto the Lord in their distress, and he heard them; he saw that they had borne the oppression of this haughty tyrant long enough without resistance; hence he directed Deborah to call for Barak, and order him to collect an army and fight their oppressors. Here is one instance, among many others, recorded in the bible, where it was the will of God for a nation to go to war with their oppressors for the defence of their just rights; and I as fully believe that it is the will of the Lord God of our forefathers, that our nation should take up arms and go to war with Britain, our oppressor. For aught I can see, as great causes existed in our case as did in Israel's. They had been oppressed for a long time, even twenty years; so have we. Their oppressors were powerful; they had nine hundred chariots of war. Our oppressors are powerful; they have a thousand ships of war. Israel had been robbed and plundered, and their persons enslaved. We have been plundered of millions, and many of our citizens enslaved. Their essential rights were assailed; so are ours. They undoubtedly remonstrated against the conduct of their oppressors; we have done the same. We have remonstrated, negotiated, implored, and intreated our oppressors to cease their depredations, leave off impressing, abusing and enslaving our citizen seamen; but all to no purpose. Now, if we have been oppressed as long as Israel was; if we have been plundered as much as they were; if we have been enslaved, and the persons of our citizens injured as much as they were; if we have given the enemy no just cause to oppress and

injure us ; if we have fought for years, in the most fair and honest way, to obtain redress of our grievances in a peaceable way, why is it not just and right for us now to draw the sword, and defend our right ? And have we not evidence that it is the will of God ? and that he approves of the war in which we are now engaged against Great Britain---I believe we have.

In this age of the church and the world, we are not to expect the Lord to make known his mind and will by special revelation, as he did to Israel ; neither are we to look for his miraculous interposition in our favor, and the destruction of our enemies, as he granted to Israel. But we are to judge of God's mind and will, from a view of his moral character, which is eternally the same ; and from parallel cases, where God has declared expressly or implicitly, his approbation of a nation's going to war for the defence of the rights and blessings he has bestowed upon them. Now judging by this rule, I think it is a clear case, that God approves of the war in which we are now engaged for the defence of our just rights. I am far from supposing it would be just and right for a nation to go to war for every insult & injury that they might receive from another nation. No, to make a war just and righteous, and have it approved by heaven, the injuries must be many and great, and long persisted in ; they must be without any just provocation, and the injured nation must make all suitable exertions, amicably and peaceably, to obtain redress of their grievances. Now I believe in my heart, all this is true of our nation ; I have in my possession all the printed documents laid before Congress, of all the negotiation for years, between our government and that of Great Britain, and cannot see what could have been said or done more by negotiation, to convince the enemy of their wrong, and prevail with them to cease their depredations and oppressions, and do us justice. For years diplomatic language has been exhausted, but in vain ; hence the inference is clear as the sun in the firmament of heaven, that the war in which our nation is engaged, is A JUST AND A RIGHTEOUS WAR, AND THAT GOD APPROVES IT.

5. As we have evidence the war in which we are now engaged, is a just and righteous war; a war which God approves, it is the duty of the whole nation to unite in it. It was the duty of all Israel to unite, and grant all their aid and help in the war against Jabin, their oppressor; every tribe, city, town, and family, belonging to the same nation, were all bound together in the same family compact, were liable to the same oppression from the enemy, and would reap mutual benefit in case of victory; hence it was the duty of all to come up to the help of the Lord; to the help of the Lord against the mighty. And, my hearers, it is equally the duty of our whole nation, to unite and help in the war we are forced into, for the defence of our just and violated rights. It is the duty of every state, every city, every town, every family and person in this nation, to unite all their wisdom, all their wealth, all their power, and all their energies, against the common foe, who has so long and so wantonly oppressed us. We all belong to the same nation; the states are all confederated and bound together in the most solemn manner, under one and the same constitution; we are a great body politic, and, as in the natural, so in the political body, *if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.*

We have all been insulted, we have all been oppressed, we have all been injured, we have all felt the effects of the plunder and robbery of the enemy; it has increased the price of most foreign articles one third, which we all help consume; we are all hurt by the impressment of our poor seamen; we are all concerned in the injuries heaped upon our nation, and we shall all be benefited by compelling the enemy to cease her depredations, and make a just and honorable peace with us. Hence it is the imperious duty of every section of the country, of every part of the nation, to unite against our great and common enemy.

6. I am led to observe, that some part of Israel refused their aid and help in the war against Jabin, their cruel oppressor, and the Lord was exceedingly displeased with, and the angel of the Lord ordered them to be cursed with a bitter curse. When it was determined to take up arms

against Jabin, there was undoubtedly an express sent to all the tribes, to every town and city, to come up to the help of the Lord and afford their aid, in some way, against the enemy; and we should have supposed they would all have united as one man, to defend their violated rights, and obtain satisfaction for twenty years oppression. But this was not the case; some, it seems by the sacred account, turned out and offered their services willingly; they were true patriots. This was the case with the tribe of Zebulon and Naphtali, and some others. Israel was divided into tribes, much as our nation is into states, & each tribe had a head or chief, called a governor as our states have. Some of these governors offered themselves and their people willingly, to help in the war: see the 9th and 18th verse of the context,—*My heart, said Deborah, is towards the governors of Israel who offered themselves willingly among the people; bless ye the Lord. Zebulon and Naphtali were a people that jeopardized their lives unto the death, in the high places of the field.* Issachar and Benjamin, are celebrated as turning out and helping in this contest, and some from other tribes; but some of the tribes and people would not help their brethren in this war; they staid at home and would not go; some of the governors would not let the people go; some thought they had better tamely bear their sufferings than to wage war with such a powerful enemy; they feared the nine hundred chariots of iron; others thought the war would cost so much, that they had better be slaves than engage in it; that probably they should lose their lives, or some of their friends. They had lost their spirit and former patriotism, and were prepared to bear the yoke of tyranny; others (undoubtedly) had been favored by the enemy, and perhaps had grown rich by trafficking with them and supplying their armies with provision. Those of this class were, from these or some other sordid motives, in favor of the enemy, and probably justified their horrid oppression and cruelty in the land; some of them might have intermarried with the enemy, and formed special connexions, and were on terms of intimacy, and probably became worshippers of their heathen Gods. Hence they

were utterly opposed to the war; they had rather their nation should be oppressed twenty years longer than go to war. Such characters as these, were then, what in modern times are called *tories*, enemies to their own country, and friends to the *enemy*; such, undoubtedly, were the inhabitants of Meroz, mentioned in our text.

Now, the conduct of all in Israel who withheld their aid, was displeasing to God, but especially the conduct of Meroz; all who refused their help were rebuked, but Meroz was cursed; see the context. *For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart. Why abodest thou among the sheep folds to hear the bleatings of the flock? For the divisions of Reuben there was great searching of heart. Gilead abode beyond Jordan; and why did Dan remain in ships? After continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches.* All these were censured for not joining in the war; but it seems their motives were not so bad, and they were not so criminal as the inhabitants of Meroz; see the text: *Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.* Dr. Scott, in his note upon this passage, observes, "That Meroz had been a flourishing city, but in consequence of this curse, it became so obscure that its situation is at present unknown. He observes, the inhabitants of Meroz, though Israelites, feared the power, and valued the friendship of the enemy more than they dreaded the power and desired the favor of God, and therefore were joined with the accursed Canaanites."

Now, my brethren, this conduct in Israel exhibits a picture of the conduct of our nation since the declaration of war. When we take into view the length and magnitude of our suffering from Great Britain; when we consider our independence, bought with the best blood and treasure of our fathers, our essential rights, and every thing we hold dear in life, assailed and threatened to be torn from us; when all pacific means failed, and our government, after seven months cool deliberation, resolved, as the last effort of an injured nation, to take up arms and defend our persons, property, and violated rights, we

might have reasonably expected to have seen the nation rise *en masse*, and unite, as one man, against the common foe; to see patriotism burn in every heart, as it did in '74, and run like lightning from Maine to Georgia, from the Atlantic to the western boundary of the nation, and to see the states emulous which should be most prompt in furnishing their quota, and granting their aid in this most righteous war. But, alas! we must tell the world we are a divided people, for the world knows it; like Israel of old, in like circumstances, many are averse to the war, and come not to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Some of the governors withhold the people, and prevent their coming to the help of the Lord, so that whole states have withheld their aid; some of the people withhold their aid from one motive, and some from another. Some are afraid of the great cost the war will be; they had rather the nation should continue to bear all the oppressions of the enemy than to be at the cost of a war; some are afraid of the thousand ships of the enemy, and consider it presumption to go to war with such a gigantic power; they feel we had better be easy and pay tribute, and be plundered, and have a few thousand of our seamen enslaved, and some of them die under their sufferings, than to encounter the evils of a war.

Others there are who are bosom friends to the enemy, who worship the same idol, monarchy, who have been distinguished by her favors, and enriched by her commerce, and by supplying her with provisions both lawfully and unlawfully. These men are violent against the war; they brand it with every epithet; they say it is unjust, impolitic, and wicked. Some of them justify all the plunder, and murder, and manstealing, and oppression of the enemy, and say we ought to bear it without complaint, for England is fighting for the liberties of the world. Men of this description will give no aid themselves to the war, and do all they can to prevent others. They rejoice in the defeats of our own arms, and mourn at the defeat of the enemy. Now, I believe this conduct is very offensive to a holy God. I fully believe the conduct of all who withhold their aid and help in this righte-

ous contest, in which our nation is engaged, is reprehensible. But those who are taking sides with the enemy, palliating and justifying all their injuries, heaped and heaped upon us, from love of British gold, or love of British monarchy, and hatred to our republican forms of government, and will not come themselves, and try to prevent others from coming up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. I believe in my heart such men are tories, and obnoxious in the sight of heaven. And was there an inspired Deborah among us she would undoubtedly pronounce a bitter curse upon them, as she did upon the inhabitants of Meroz.

A curse will follow such characters. For look, my brethren, to the fate of the tories of our revolution. Like Cain, whom God had cursed, they wandered as exiles, and vagabonds in the earth, shunned and abhorred by every one; a curse pursued them to the grave, if not further; and it ever will *traitors* and *tories*. But as it was in Israel, so it is in our nation, when called to arms, many of the governors and people have offered themselves willingly, yea, some of the states have done nobly, and particularly the people of Kentucky and Ohio, like Zebulon and Naphtali, have jeopardied their lives unto the death, in the high places of the field. Notwithstanding the faint heartedness of some, and opposition of others, yet the great body of the nation, of its real and physical strength, are true patriots, are hearty in the cause, and are determined to die free, before they will live slaves; many of them offer themselves willingly, and are coming up to the help of the nation against the mighty.

7. I observe once more. A nation that engages in a just war, a war for the defence of their just rights, which is a war that God approves, such a war he considers as his own cause, and to help in such a war is to come to the help of the Lord; and if the nation humble themselves for their sin, and cry unto the Lord, he will be with them, and grant them success. He did Israel; and I have no doubt he will our nation. The Lord went out before the little army of Israel, when they marched against the nine hundred chariots of war, and discomfited the enemy.

And has not the Lord gone out before our little navy when they have gone out to fight the thousand ships of the enemy? And what exploits have they done? What victories have they atchieved, to the lasting honor of the nation, and the astonishment of the world?

It is admirable what our few ships of war have effected when they have come in contact with the enemy. Two of their largest frigates have been sunk, and another taken and brought into our ports. One sloop of war has been sunk, and several taken. In the most of these cases the enemy were equal, in some superior, yet they were dreadfully cut to pieces, their vessels made wrecks, and many of their men killed and wounded; while our vessels have received but little injury, and but few men either killed or wounded. This cannot be accounted for upon any other principle than the special interposition of heaven. On the sea the enemy has oppressed us for twenty years; there they have plundered our property; there they have enslaved our citizens. From their ships of war the cry of our poor seamen (covered with blood and wounds) has gone up to heaven. The Lord has been witness to their cruelty and oppression on the ocean; and there he has given us success. Great Britain, for twenty years, in all her wars, has never met with so much on the sea to stain her pride as she has experienced from our few gallant ships. Let the name of the Lord be praised, who giveth us the victory.

And our private armed ships have met with great success. Niles' Register states, that we have taken from the enemy, since the war, 369 vessels, in about nine months. Surely many of our valiant seamen have cause to exclaim with Deborah, in the context, *O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.*

But our success hitherto on the land has not been equal to that on the ocean. The failure of the North-western army, in the outset, deranged the whole campaign on the frontiers, the last season. By the governors' withholding the men, and many of the militia refusing to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty, defeat and loss at-

tended our arms in Canada. But there our troops always signalized themselves when led to action. The enemy there have suffered about as much as we have. Many of the Indian towns have been laid waste, and many of the savage barbarians have met the just reward of their bloody deeds. It is easy to account for the want of success on land. There has been want of men, of regular troops, want of discipline and subordination, if not want of system. All these, I trust, will be remedied the coming season, if the war continues, and the enemy will not listen to overtures for peace. And I have no doubt of the final issue; for I am fully convinced the war on our part is just and righteous; that the Lord approves of it; that he will be on our side, and enable us to bring the enemy to just and honorable terms of peace.

But, my brethren and friends, we, as a nation, as a state, as a town, as families and individuals, have a great duty to do. And this day calls upon us to enter upon it with all the heart. It is our duty to fast and pray, and humble ourselves before the great God. We should realize God's great goodness to us and our nation, and be thankful; we should take into view the number, greatness, and aggravation of our sins, and be humbled before God, and repent us in dust and ashes. Our sins are many, they have gone up over us as a thick cloud; they have reached heaven; they have provoked God to anger, and he has suffered our enemies to oppress us, and bring war upon us to punish us. We have cause to adopt the language of Daniel, the prophet, and say, "*O Lord, we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee; and unto us confusion of faces, as at this day. But to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him.*"

With humiliation, confession and repentance of our sin, we should add fervent prayer. If we are a praying nation and people; if we pray in faith, and cry to God, he will hear and answer, and help us in this time of war. We should pray to God to turn us, as a nation to himself, and

blefs us. That he would blefs the President and Congress, and give them wisdom, fidelity and patience. That he would unite the people, cement the confederation, and difpofe the rulers and people in each ftate to their duty, and come up to the help of the Lord again, the mighty. We would pray the Lord to give wisdom, valor and prudence to our commanders; health and courage to our foldiers and mariners; fhield them in the day of battle, and crown our arms by fea and land with fuccefs, until our enemies are difpofed to make a juft and honorable peace. We fhould pray to God to ftay the peftilence, and give us health in all our borders. We fhould implore him to blefs the labors of the husbandman, make the earth fruitful, and favor us with a plentiful harveft. We fhould pray the Lord to put an end to defolating war, and blefs all nations with peace and righteoufnefs. O! let us pray God to pour his fpirit upon us, and make us holy, and prepare us for all fufferings upon earth, and the enjoyment of himfelf in heaven.

O! may the Lord hear our prayers, and fave our nation, and all the glory fhall be given to the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghoft*, world without end. *Amen.*





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